

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road**

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

MINUTES

Members: Steve Bacon, Jon Hand, Chris Kueffner, Frank McNabb, Karin Randolph and Pene Williams

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm and Kathleen Paterson

Guests: Board members Matthew Hart, Toni Moran and Alex Roe

Storrs Center Team: Tim Andre and Norm Goldman (Desman Associates), Sam Gardner (Gregg Wies & Gardner Architects), Lou Marquet and Macon Toledano (LeylandAlliance), Geoff Fitzgerald and Andy Graves (BL Companies), Lon Hultgren (Town of Mansfield)

1. Call to Order

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes from February 15, 2011.

There was no quorum to approve the minutes.

4. Continued Review and Discussion of Schematic Design for Parking Garage and Intermodal Center

Mr. Bacon introduced Mr. Gardner, Mr. Andre, Mr. Goldman, Mr. Toledano, Mr. Fitzgerald, and Mr. Hultgren.

Mr. Bacon said the parking garage, intermodal center, and Village Street will all be subject to zoning permit applications. He reminded the Committee that the process is for the Committee to review the applications and make a recommendation to the Partnership Board of Directors regarding compliance with the design guidelines. The Board holds a public hearing on the applications. Ultimately, the zoning permit needs to be authorized by the Mansfield Director of Planning.

Mr. Bacon noted that a special meeting might need to be held to continue review of the garage and intermodal plans, since the Committee only meets monthly.

Mr. Gardner noted that the team is meeting with the local and regional transit providers this week to assess their needs.

Mr. Gardner opened his presentation with a Power Point and said the goal of the intermodal center is to be the focal point of Storrs Center. A mixed-use building is planned to be attached to the intermodal center. Mr. Gardner said the intermodal center will be part of the garage but will not be built at the same time.

The goal is to have a waiting area with travel information. A mezzanine will look over the waiting area below. There will be an elevator and stairs that connect to the garage and mezzanine. There will also be an area for a possible retail bike operation. There will be a bike storage cage in the garage and showers and changing rooms for bicyclists. Mr. Hultgren noted that a key card will be required to get to the bike showers. There will be a plaza outside the intermodal center with seating and they are looking at some innovative designs.

Mr. Hultgren thought that there will need to be staffing of the intermodal center at event and commuting times.

The pay station for the garage will be in the intermodal center.

Mr. Gardner noted that the Village Street and the other transit pathways will need to be designed to the Storrs Center Design District Design Guidelines. The transit pathways will need to conform to the Federal Transit Administration guidelines as well.

In response to a question from Mr. Bacon, Mr. Fitzgerald said the bus loading will be on the opposite side of the street of the intermodal center as well as in front of it.

Alex Roe said that an intermodal center is “forward-thinking.” She encouraged the design team to look at a modern design to celebrate this building. It should be light and vibrant.

Mr. Gardner said the team is continuing to work on the architecture as it works through the critical size and location issues.

Jon Hand noted that he liked the clock, and actually likes a more New England look.

Pene Williams asked for clarification of the purposes of the intermodal center. Mr. Goldman noted that it serves as the main public entry to the garage and potential bike shop. Mr. Hultgren said it will include public restrooms that will be accessible during daylight hours.

Ms. Williams said she would be interested in a cafe in the intermodal area to encourage socializing. Mr. Goldman noted that there may be a kiosk while Mr. Marquet reiterated that retail stores will be adjacent to the intermodal center.

Chris Kueffner reiterated his interest in pocket parks.

Mr. Andre reviewed the current garage design. He said the plan calls for 606 parking spots for both residential users and visitors. He said the residents will be parking in a “nested” area in the garage. Mr. Andre said that the 3rd level will be the nested area and it is where cars with visitors will turn around if spots are filled. However, visitors will know at the point of entry if the garage is filled.

There will be a small reserved area for shared cars and charging stations on the first floor.

Mr. Gardner noted that if the intermodal center is closed, people can still access the garage.

Mr. Andre said there will be elevators in the south corner of the garage. There will be glass doors and a glass curtain wall that will allow sunlight into the lobby and give people a sense of security when they access the garage.

Mr. Andre said that the residential units can be accessed from the garage but they will be controlled with a key card.

Mr. Andre said the team is looking at two options with respect to the north facade – 1) open area with rail or 2) mesh covering. They will likely go with the mesh if it is affordable.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that it will be difficult to see the garage facade from Dog Lane.

Mr. Andre said the staircase will be open with glass.

He said the garage will be a gray pre-cast structure. Ms. Roe asked why the gray color was chosen. Mr. Andre said initially the issue was funding. Ms. Roe noted her preference for cream/sand color.

Mr. Andre said an awning is planned on the lower garage adjacent to the intermodal design where vehicles pull in.

Mr. Kueffner said he was concerned about the elevator tower. Would it be too hot? Mr. Andre said there is discussion about using the ventilation from the air conditioning in the intermodal center to pass up through the lobby and exhaust out the top. In response to a comment from Matt Hart, Mr. Andre said he thinks he can address the ventilation issue. Mr. Hultgren said the key is to balance ventilation with security.

Mr. Hand noted his concern about the size of the tower. Mr. Andre said it is 55 feet from floor to floor which is within the Storrs Center Special Design District Design Guidelines. Mr. Andre noted that stair towers are not subject to the height restriction. Mr. Toledano noted that the Guidelines allow for 70 feet max.

Mr. Andre said the garage will be designed to allow solar panels on the roof if funding becomes available.

Mr. Andre said there will be a blue light system (two on each floor) and an intercom system in the garage for security.

Mr. Toledano said there is further need for the team to integrate the garage and intermodal center. He asked for any additional input on the tower.

Mr. Bacon said he likes the tower as it makes the garage distinct.

Frank McNabb asked about the access of bikes to the intermodal center. Mr. Fitzgerald thought the access would be from Dog Lane. The streets are designed to be slower with a goal toward easy pedestrian access. Mr. Hultgren noted that the signage in the area will need to be good as there will be various modes of transportation interacting.

5. Review of Village Street preliminary plans

Mr. Fitzgerald showed a map with the Village Street and the connecting transit pathway roads. He noted one important change from the conceptual renderings and that is that the area between the Storrs Commons buildings (in the back) and the project, will now provide more direct access to the garage. The street area will generally serve the purpose of a loading area and be a one way street.

Another important proposal is to change some of the parking on the main Village Street area to angle from parallel parking. It allows for more parking spaces (50 to 60) to be built. There are examples of angle parking in CT downtowns including Madison and Manchester. Andy Graves reviewed the massing of the buildings. Mr. Toledano said that angle parking will call for widening the street in that area from 32 feet to 22 feet.

Mr. Fitzgerald also noted a proposed pocket park area. He noted that the angle parking allows for more room to have pocket plazas.

Mr. Toledano said they are looking for feedback on the one way street and angle parking.

He noted that the scale of the buildings on Village Street are proposed to be two to three stories.

Mr. Toledano said the new plan was shared with Town staff to get their reaction. He said the staff was ok with the proposed changes.

Ms. Roe asked how bikes are handled with angle parking. Mr. Hultgren said the streets will be shared with cars but signage will be included. Ms. Roe expressed concerns about safety.

Ms. Moran said she prefers the angle parking, noting that sometimes people will double park with parallel parking.

Mr. Bacon asked if the parking will still be parallel on the southern side of the Village Street and Mr. Toledano replied in the affirmative.

By consensus, the Committee liked the idea of angle parking.

6. Topics for Next Meeting and Set Meeting Date

Mr. Hultgren said the area for the garage needs to be surveyed and this can be done soon since the snow is gone.

He said the goal is to submit a zoning permit application for the garage and intermodal center in mid-April.

Mr. Bacon asked that the team let the Committee know if it needs a special meeting before its regularly scheduled meeting on April 19.

7. Adjourn

Karin Randolph moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bacon seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm